

## Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-03 L-02 H-02 INR-05 PM-03

PRS-01 SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01

ACDA-10 SAB-01 SAM-01 SCCT-01 /059 W

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P R 160903Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3715

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2246

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, XF

SUBJ: DE BORCHGRAVE'S JUNE 14 INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT

ASAD; VIEWS ON ASAD'S VISIT TO JORDAN

1. NEWSWEEK'S DE BORCHGRAVE MET FOR TWO HOURS WITH PRESIDENT ASAD JUNE 14; FOUND HIM RELAXED AND IN GOOD HUMOR AFTER HIS VISIT TO JORDAN. FOLLOWING WERE MAJOR POINTS OF INTEREST AS DE BORCHGRAVE SUMMARIZED THEM TO CHARGE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW.

2. ON QUESTION OF ARAB POSITION ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, ASAD ASSERTED WITH CONFIDENCE THAT PROGRESS ON EGYPTIAN FRONT HAD TO BE LINKED TO PROGRESS ON SYRIAN AND PALESTINIAN FRONTS AS WELL. HE SAID HE AND SADAT WERE TOTALLY AGREED ON THIS POINT.

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3. ASAD SAID THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE PROGRESS ON ALL THREE

FRONTS AT SAME TIME. WHEN DE BORCHGRAVE ASKED DID THIS SPECIFICALLY MEAN PROGRESS ON WEST BANK, ASAD REPLIED THAT HE MEANT PROGRESS ON PALESTINIAN PROBLEM (I.E. DE BORCHGRAVE INTERPRETED, NOT NECESSARILY TERRITORIAL PROGRESS AT THIS TIME).

4. ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT JORDAN WOULD JOIN A NEW WAR INITIATED BY ISRAEL AGAINST SYRIA ALONE, ASAD REPLIED EMPHATICALLY YES. HE ADDED THAT OTHER ARAB STATES, NOT ONLY JORDAN, WOULD JOIN ALSO.

5. ASKED HOW SYRIA WOULD VIEW PROLONGED NO-WAR-NO-PEACE SITUATION SUCH AS EXISTED 1967-1973, ASAD REPLIED THAT IT WAS ERRONEOUS TO VIEW 1967-1973 AS NO-WAR-NO-PEACE PERIOD. HARDLY A DAY HAD GONE BY WITHOUT SOME MILITARY EXCHANGE, ISRAELI PENETRATION RAID OR OVERFLIGHT. A SIMILAR BUT MORE SERIOUS SITUATION WOULD RECUR, HE THOUGHT, IF CURRENT PEACE EFFORTS FAILED, NOT BECAUSE ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER WANTED IT OR ORDERED IT BUT BECAUSE IT WAS INEVITABLE.

6. FINAL TWO QUESTIONS WERE ON NEW REJECTION FRONT OUT OF LIBYA AND SYRIA'S RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. ASAD DOWNPLAYED BOTH, SEEING NOT MUCH TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT IN LATEST PRONOUNCEMENTS OUT OF LIBYA AND SAYING IRAQI DISPUTE WAS MARGINAL TO CENTRAL CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL AND WOULD SOON PASS.

7. JORDAN VISIT. ASKED DE BORCHGRAVE HIS IMPRESSIONS OF ASAD'S VISIT TO JORDAN, WHICH HE HAD COVERED, PARTICULARLY WHETHER HE KNEW OF ANY DEVELOPMENTS IN MILITARY FIELD. HE SAID HE THOUGHT PREVIOUS AGREEMENT ALLOWING SYRIA TO EXTEND AIR DEFENSE COVERAGE INTO JORDANIAN AIRSPACE SO LONG AS SAM BATTERIES, ETC., WERE ACTUALLY LOCATED INSIDE SYRIA HAD BEEN CONFIRMED. HE ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF VISIT HAD BEEN AMOUNT OF TIME ASAD AND KING HUSSEIN HAD SPENT TOGETHER. AS RESULT, ASAD NOW HAD NEW PERCEPTION OF HUSSEIN AND ACCEPTED HIM AS A BROTHER ARAB LEADER.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, SY, XF, JO, (ASAD, HAFIZ), (DE BORCHGRAVE, ARNAUD)  
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